2-10-2006

Graduate Conducting Recital: Benjamin Aneff, graduate conductor

Benjamin Aneff

Ithaca College Chamber Orchestra

Ithaca College Symphony Orchestra

ITHACA COLLEGE

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

GRADUATE CONDUCTING RECITAL

ITHACA COLLEGE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
ITHACA COLLEGE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Benjamin Aneff, graduate conductor
Jeffrey Grogan, director

Ford Hall
Friday, February 10, 2006
8:15 p.m.

ITHACA

PROGRAM

ITHACA COLLEGE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
Benjamin Aneff, graduate conductor
Jeffrey Grogan, director

Overture to Coriolanus, Op. 62 — Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Symphony No. 1 in C Major, Op. 21 62 — Ludwig van Beethoven

Adagio molto – Allegro con brio
Andante cantabile con moto
Menuetto – Allegro molto e vivace
Adagio – Allegro molto e vivace

INTERMISSION

ITHACA COLLEGE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Benjamin Aneff, graduate conductor
Jeffrey Grogan, director

Symphony No. 5 in D, Op. 47 — Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–1975)

Moderato
Allegretto
Largo
Allegro non troppo

Graduate Recital presented in partial fulfillment for the degree Master of Music in Conducting Performance.

Benjamin Aneff is from the studio of Jeffrey Grogan.

PROGRAM NOTES

Ludwig van Beethoven's *Coriolanus* was originally written as incidental music to accompany the Heinrich Joseph von Collin tragedy of the same name. It is notable that Shakespear also wrote a tragedy based on *Coriolanus*, but it was that of Collin which Beethoven set his music to, having its premeir at the Burgtheater in Vienna in 1807.

In the drama, Coriolanus is a Roman patrician who has been banished from his native city as a result of his lack of concern for the starving people there. After taking up with the Volscians and plotting revenge, the proud and disgraced Coriolanus leads their armies against Rome. Upon reaching the border of his former city, he is approached by emissaries who plead with him to abandon his intentions to invade. Coriolanus, who has long waited for the day on which he will finally avenge his eviction and humiliation, sends them away and prepares for attack. A last effort to save Rome comes when his mother and his wife plead with him to desist. He is at last dissuaded from carrying out his plans, realizing they are now abhorrent to him. In Collin's play, he determines that he must regain his honor, which can only be effected by death at his own hand. The Overture to the play is one of the most frequently performed and recorded of Beethoven's orchestral works. It was premiered in March of 1807 and first published in Vienna in the following year. In it Beethoven foreshadows the whole of the work, telling the story of Coriolanus in a mere nine minutes.

The Symphonies of Ludwig van Beethoven would cast a shadow over the whole of nineteenth-century symphonic composers. These works are considered examples of man's finest achievements, works of genius in every way. Unlike his famous symphonic predecessors Mozart and Haydn, Beethoven did not begin writing symphonies until he was almost thirty years old. His *Symphony No. 1 in C Major, Op. 21* was began in April of 1799, when Beethoven was already an established musician living in Vienna. Though classic in nature (Beethoven was a student of Haydn, and this style is evident throughout this symphony), the evidence of what was to come is shown from the opening chord.

The Symphony opens with a C dominant seventh chord, a chord typically reserved for F major, and not the expected tonic chord of C Major. The celebrated discord mentioned above ushers in the slow introduction, questioning and insistent. It leads to the start of the exposition, again interrogatory in character. Fanfares add a martial flavor to the music, which is offset by the more lyrically inclined second subject group. The exposition is repeated, according to Classical convention, and the development that follows is terse and far more acerbic in manner, and does not allow the same contrast between songful and martial elements. Already extremely mature and "studied," this austere development is relieved only when the recapitulation arrives, now with great forcefulness. The imitative dialogues between wind and strings are predictably Classical in style, as is the jubilant coda. The *Andante* seems more subdued and relaxed, but the manner in which it preserves the latent drama associated with symphonic form is particularly subtle and entertaining. It begins with a fugal motif, derived from the rising tonic triad heard at the start of the first movement's exposition, and used so emphatically in its coda. Triplet figures in the violins and flute and off-beat accompanying chords are supported by regular drum taps, an effect Beethoven would use in greater degree in works such as his *"Emporer" Piano Concerto.* The third movement *Menuetto* is a *Scherzo* in every way but by name, pointing to one of the most subsequent changes Beethoven would make to the standard symphony form. It's tempo marking is quick, and only in its trio does it remember the clean classical style of the time. The finale also begins on the "wrong" chord, this time a tutti G instead of the expected C of a C Major symphony. A short, scale-based introduction brings about a quick, Haydn-inspired exposition. Beethoven's use of scalar figures becomes increasingly obsessive, as the theme is heard in a variety of keys, and is often heard in inversion when various instruments are in dialogue. The development features a daring harmonic treatment of the scale theme, and Beethoven employs much dense counterpoint before the work ends in a positive and triumphant reassertion of C major.

In 1936, the Soviet government launched an official attack against Dmitri Shostakovich's music, calling it "vulgar, formalistic, and neurotic." He became an example to other Soviet composers, who rightfully interpreted these events as a broad campaign against musical modernism. This constituted a crisis, both in Shostakovich's career and in Soviet music as a whole; composers had no choice but to write simple, optimistic music that spoke directly (especially through folk idioms and patriotic programs) to the people and glorified the state.

In light of these circumstances, Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony (first performed in 1937) is a bold composition that seems to fly in the face of his critics. Although the musical language is pared down from that of his earlier symphonies, the Fifth eschews any hint of patriotic program and, instead, dwells on undeniably somber and tragic affects -- wholly unacceptable public emotions at the time. According to the cellist Mstislav Rostropovich, the government would certainly have had Shostakovich executed for writing such a work had the public ovation at the first performance not lasted forty minutes. The official story, however, is quite different. An unknown commentator dubbed the symphony "the creative reply of a soviet artist to justified criticism," and to the work was attached an autobiographical program focusing on the composer's metamorphosis from incomprehensible formalist to standard-bearer of the communist party. Publicly, Shostakovich accepted the official interpretation of his work; however, in the controversial collection of his memoirs (*Testimony*, by Solomon Volkov) he is quoted as saying: "I think it is clear to everyone what happens in the Fifth. The rejoicing is forced, created under threat...you have to be a complete oaf not to hear that."

Regardless of its philosophical underpinnings, Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5 is a masterpiece of the orchestral repertory, poignant and economical in its conception. Given some of his earlier works, the Fifth is conservative in language. Throughout the work he allows the strings to be the dominant orchestral force, making soloistic use of the woodwinds and horn especially effective. The *Moderato* begins with a jagged, foreboding canon in the strings that forms the motivic basis for the entire movement. The impassioned mood is occasionally interrupted by a lyrical melody with string ostinato, later the subject of a duet for flute and horn.

The second movement (*Allegretto*) is a grotesque 3/4 dance which, at times, can't help but mock itself; the brass section is featured prominently. The following *Largo*, a sincere and personal outpouring of musical emotion, is said to have left the audience at the work's premiere in tears. Significantly, it was composed during an intensely creative period following the arrest and execution of one of Shostakovich's teachers.

The concluding *Allegro non troppo* has been the center of much debate: some critics consider it a poorly constructed concession to political pressure, while others have made note of its possible irony. While the prevailing mood is triumphant, there is some diversion to the somber and foreboding, and it is not until the end that it takes on the overtly triumphant character the Soviet regime was looking for in its works.

Regardless of meaning, the Fifth Symphony of Dmitri Shostakovich is one of the great masterpieces of 20th Century Music.

ITHACA COLLEGE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Jeffrey D. Grogan, conductor

Violin I
Josh Modney**
Megan Atchley
Christian Simmelink
Maeve O'Hara
Jeff Abbott
Laura Sciavalino
Elizabeth Stein
Tim Ball
Brenna Gillette
Shawn Riley
Jeannine McGreevy
Kate Goldstein

Violin II
Natasha Colkett*
Chris Jones
Mary Raschella
Ian Salmon
Paul Diegert
Brian Hwang
Collin Oettle
Lindsey Leone
Danice Desir
Diane Bartholomew
Sharon Mohar
Ben Nugent
Marc Bettis
Sarina Woo

Viola
Annabelle Terbetski, *
Hannah Petersen
Sayer Palmer
Bethany Neidbala
Jessica Owens
Nicole Wright
Lauren Buono
Shanan Glandz
Jason Diaz
Sara Shepard

Cello
Alana Chown*
Jennifer Chieffalo
Diana Geiger
Tim Nowak
Emily McBride
Matt Rotjan
Emily McNeill
Molly Sörlien
Sam Boase-Miller
Laura Messina
Kelly Quinn

Double Bass
Patrick O'Connell*
Justin Wixson
Xander Lott
Audrey Miller
William Olmstead
David Rossi
Naomi Williams
Nate Galla
Ben Reynolds

Piccolo
Melissa Werthheimer

Flute
Michelle Casareale
Emily Watson

Oboe
Emily Di Angelo
Luke Conklin

Clarinet
Matthew Libera
Wolcott Humphrey

E flat Clarinet
Lauren Del Re

Bassoon
Ryan Potvin
Andrew Chapman

Contra Bassoon
Jennifer Meyers

Horn
Michael Bellofatto
Danny Carter
Andrea Silverstrini
Brian Hoeflschweiger
Lori Roy

Trumpet
Joe Brown
Nikola Tomic
Nick Kunkle

Trombone
Phillip Machnik
Mark Lalumia

Bass Trombone
Matt Barry

Tuba
Will Plenk

Timpani
Andrew Sickmeier

Percussion
Alan Dust*
Matthew Donello
Greg Sutliff

Piano/Celeste
Russell Posegate

Harp
Myra Kovary+

** Denotes Concertmaster
* Denotes Principal
+ Denotes Guest Artist

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Oboe
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Chrisopher Neske

Clarinet
Matthew Libera
Wolcott Humphrey

Bassoon
Jennifer Meyers
Katie Barker

Horn
Michael Bellofato
Rose Valby

Trumpet
Nichola Tomek
Lindsey Jessick

Timpani
Andrew Sickmeier

* denotes principal